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ABSTRACT

Emphasizing the "people" context of the work of librarians in off-campus libraries, this paper argues that intelligent use of technology ought to drive librarians toward a more sophisticated approach to the existing strengths, learning goals, and living and learning style preferences of distance learners as they cope with the stresses of their societal roles. It is further argued that one of the key principles of the relationships and responsibilities which operate to maintain effective graduate level distance learning is that the relationships between the learner and the professor, the learner and the librarians, and the professor and the librarians should reflect a learner-centered view and, therefore, be collaborative in nature. It is noted that, while the experience of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education has been fairly successful on the whole, the smaller scale of the context made it easier to nurture relationships and explain how responsibility in learning and teaching is divided. The results of two recent studies which explored the relationships among libraries, distance educators, and distance learners are cited as examples of how responsibilities and relationships on larger scales may operate with less success. These studies found that librarians were isolated from the distance education environment; interaction among distance learners and their educators was at a minimum level; and distance learners felt that they were not receiving enough feedback or encouragement from their instructors. It is concluded that, in light of today's technologies, which are increasing the amount of distance learning, librarians must re-establish themselves as educators and play a more participatory role in the process of distance and adult education. (19 references) (MAB)

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Relationships and responsibilities: Librarians and distance educators working together

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Opening Keynote Address for
The Off-Campus Library Services Conference
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Thank you for your invitation. I am delighted to be here for several reasons. First, you are a gathering of committed and proactive professionals who are confronting key issues of contemporary librarianship. If any group of librarians is to mediate creatively between the pragmatic world of adult learning and the high-technology world of information, it is you. Second, I was a librarian in various contexts in Australia for fourteen years before I came to Canada in 1980. It was a marvellous experience that taught me as much about people as it did about procedures and technologies. Third, your invitation challenged me to think afresh about the responsibilities of and relationships between librarians and adult educators and the issues we are facing. I want to acknowledge here the insights (and good humour) of three colleagues whose reactions I value - Valerie Downs, Jan Schmidt of OISE and Judy Snow of University of Toronto. I wish to acknowledge an OISE staffer here - Pat Serafini.

Today we should discuss some issues about off-campus libraries and talk about your reactions and opinions. Let me offer first some reflections and some experience as background to the issues. You will see that this background is very much people oriented.

My first reflection is that speed of change and quantity of information activity will continue to be the rules, rather than the exceptions. Valerie Downs said recently that librarians have lost their fear of change because they have no choice but to accept it; the pace of change enables them to join a momentum that leaves no time for standing on the riverbank and waiting for calm water. I think that we all are white water rafting, and it is exciting, but only if we keep our heads level and our eyes on the main chance. Valerie also argues that "today's issues are tomorrow's fait accompli, so we had better be quick!" Judy Snow echoes this attitude when she says in her inimitable way that "the technologies will change our services, but librarians have to get off the pot". You all know how data base technologies are changing your world, but there are other technologies such as computer conferencing (CC) and audio graphics that are expanding rapidly into education. Scientific American periodical, for example, used its September 1991 issue to acknowledge this expansion with a set of state-of-the-art reports on CC. Rapaport (1991) cites cost and speed reasons to explain why business and the public are showing dramatic increases in the use of CC (Rapaport 1991:271). He reports that "In 1991, some estimates put the number of bulletin board systems operating in the United States at 14,000!" (p. 278). In addition to faster speeds of activity, we therefore have to deal with greater quantities of information; in part from the usual published sources, but also in part from the explosive use of CC. Levinson uses graphic imagery to illustrate this point: "If, as David Reisman said, print was the 'gunpowder of the human mind'...we may be in for an unleashing of mental energies on an atomic-fusion level" (1990:10).

Another pressure concerning speed is relevant here. Data bases and networking will strengthen the new goal of "just-in-time" supply of information and weaken the old goal of "just-in-case" storage of information. Paul Peters used the "just in time" approach to explain the capacity of networks for high volume storage capacity and print-out (Peters 1991:2). Certainly, this new goal appears to be as difficult to implement as the one it has superseded, especially in times of increasing economic constraints. Networks cost, as you well know, so it seems to me that tough decisions have to be made about resource allocation for collection building and information services. I have heard various librarians say that in future they have to worry more about accessibility to information rather than ownership of it. But how will they decide on ethical and politically smart priorities?

The technological shifts toward macro, global-sized networks for information organization and storage may in turn promote a shift toward micro-sized, communal psychological arenas for meeting the achievement and affiliation drives of adult learners. My prediction here echoes the slogan of "high tech. for high touch" (Naisbitt & Aburdene 1990:304). Our intelligent use of technology ought to drive us towards a more sophisticated approach to the "warmware" - the existing strengths, learning goals, living and learning style preferences of learners as they cope with the stresses of their societal roles. Faith Popcorn's assessment of eight societal trends are to me intuitively sound, and I want to mention one here because it relates to how we need to handle our stressors (Popcorn 1991). In referring to the hectic and often time pressured "99-Lives" context we live in, she argues that we want "more of less", and that we need facilities for "streamlining" our lives in the forms of speed and efficiency: eg more services to save us time, multifunction labour saving devices and one-stop-shop services.

Part of this need for streamlining and ease of use ought to be met as Levinson's theory of technology development works out over the next decade. He argues that as our data and communication technologies continue to transcend our biological boundaries of eyesight, earshot and memory (Levinson 1990:4), the technologies will evolve "towards human function", ie they will become more natural to use; in Levinson's term, "anthropotropic".

Let me now turn to my experience to draw out some key dimensions of this people context of our work. First, two flashbacks. My first experience of off-campus library use began when I was seven years old in Australia. I used to receive a box of books each month from the State Library of South Australia, carefully chosen by librarians I never met and would have been too scared to meet anyway! Can you imagine the joy for a seven year old who was bored at elementary school, but who felt an education lifeline in those boxes of books sent up on the train? And if I ever received a hand-written note from one of those awesome librarians, then my day was made! I wonder how often our learners feel that excitement and satisfaction when your material arrives?

The second flashback has me now as the Director of the Resource Centre for South Australia's Open College - a distance mode college of 17,000 adult students taking trade, vocational and general studies. Approximately 65% of our students lived in urban or semi-urban areas. Despite my formal librarianship training and education, I spent much time there just talking with students - reassuring, listening, legitimizing their anxieties, sharing my own anxieties about my studies, and generally trying to see the learners as adults, rather than library users. One day a woman in her mid-fifties came in and hesitantly asked for a book. Sensing that the request was a cover for something else, I asked her how she was experiencing her course. She replied, after some hesitation, that the course wasn't the problem; her adult children and her husband were telling her that she didn't need to study and would probably fail anyway. Her self esteem had been crushed, and her self concept was in disarray. Feeling myself rather inadequate, and trying to remember some basic counselling strategies, I began talking with her about how she might cope with this somewhat negative context. I also shared my own feelings of self-doubt in my own studies (at that time I was finishing a Graduate Diploma in Educational Technology). I think I did more for her learning by just standing still and responding in human terms than by just

bustling around and getting the book. What I didn't understand at the time, because I had not yet studied adult learning, was that this woman was a potential candidate for some learning dysfunctions. Dorothy MacKeracher, a leading Canadian adult educator, has summarized four key dysfunctional processes thus: reflective thinking becomes repetitive thinking; curiosity becomes anxiety; coping strategies becomes defense mechanisms; selective attention becomes stress and distorted perception (MacKeracher 1985). I certainly have experienced all those negative results; have you? The learner who looks at you rather uncomprehendingly or repeats his questions may be having the same problems.

I've used these flashbacks to introduce the strongest continuing dimensions of my experience - the affective as well as the cognitive demands and conditions of adult learners, and my capacity be responsive as another learner, not just as an apparently omniscient professional. When I was a less mature librarian and later adult/distance educator, I often responded to learners through filters created by institutional requirements - if the learner fitted the filter, all was well. If not, I retreated into rules and regulations. As my professional maturity develops, my focus of concern is being reversed. The filters I now use to respond nest in a learner-centred framework, supported by certain personal values and knowledge of how adults mature and learn (Merriam & Caffarella 1991; Burge 1988; Boud & Griffin 1987; Brundage & MacKeracher 1980). My experience with audio conferencing since 1982 and more recently with computer conferencing also has taught me to think people first and technology second (Burge & Snow 1990). My teaching and learning design experience also have reinforced my conviction that adult educators must be more concerned with dialogue about information rather than the delivery of information; with learning processes rather than learning products; with the learner first, rather than with the teacher first. Delivery and product have their place, but in adult learning, the life experience of learners and their needs for discussion demand that facilitators and tutors pay careful attention to dialogue and process (Brookfield 1991; Tiberius 1990; Open Teaching 1988). The new interactive virtual classrooms of distance education have made some distance educators aware of new skills they need in order to manage the human factors of learning. Designs for the new virtual classrooms of distance learning have to take into account responsibilities and relationships of the inhabitants in ways we would not have dreamed of a decade ago. We are searching for theories and principles - from our own tacit and other people's explicit knowledge - that will help us divide and share responsibilities, and build inclusionary relationships. Judy Snow and I determined that five key principles of relationships and responsibilities operate to maintain effective graduate level distance learning (Burge & Snow 1990), and I think that these principles are relevant for other contexts:

1. The organization of the students' learning activities must be relatively detailed but also flexible.

2. Relationships between the learner and the professor, the learner and the librarians, and the professor and the librarian should reflect a learner-centered view and therefore be collaborative in nature.

3. Responsibilities for the progress and success of a course should be defined at the outset of the course and then maintained throughout the course.

4. The use of technologies should be guided by the formats' capacity for reliability and transparency.

5. Articulation should be the key process in a learner-centered course.

Our experience at OISE since 1982 has been fairly successful on the whole, but only through constant vigilance and anticipatory behaviour. Our context was on a smaller scale too, so we were able to more easily nurture relationships and explain how responsibility in learning and teaching is divided. Let me now give two examples from recent research of how responsibilities and relationships on larger scales can operate with less success.

The first study was carried out over 1987 and 1988, and was designed to document

> how distance learners currently manage with the present level of material resources and human services available from various libraries; what problems with resources and services are experienced directly by three constituencies -- the students, library staff and faculty; what ideas these constituents have for upgrading material resources and people-based services; and finally, what changes or continuities in library practice are needed in order to carry out realistic and creative recommendations for distance education development up to 1990 (Burge, Snow & Howard 1988a).

Data for the study came from open and closed questions in a field-tested questionnaire and later interviews with selected library staff. 1750 instruments were mailed to faculty, students, and university, college and public library staff. Return rates were: academic librarians 85%, public library staff 50%, faculty 39% and students 29%. Here are a few highlights of the results - the full results are available in the report Developing Partnerships (Burge, Snow & Howard 1988b).

> The issue of relationships - between library staff and their peers and between learners and their distance education colleagues -- drew comments ranging from the poignant to the poisonous. Academic librarians felt they enjoyed from "good" to "excellent" relationships with public library staff, but the feeling was not always reciprocal, according to the public library staff interviewed. However, academic librarians claimed little success in relationships with faculty and distance education administrators: almost all used terms such as "poor", "embryonic", "distant", and "minimal", to characterize present conditions, caused, it seems, by a series of exclusionary factors. The result is that when library staff are included in distance education processes to any degree, many are forced to "react at the eleventh hour". Students of course are the ultimate losers, although the irony there is that they may never realize to what extent they are disadvantaged. Building in, not building out, library-based staff and material services was regarded as a necessary, although not an easy process. "If everyone thinks (and acts as if) courses are self-contained, then the library is out of the picture."

The situation with distance education administrators was equally strained -- interviewees felt themselves to be "removed", or "totally isolated" or "reactive", but did not entirely blame themselves: e.g., "(don't) make us beg, badger and cajole you for information about courses and students." Some frank reasons were given for the generally poor level of relationships with faculty and administrators: interviewees focussed in on their own reactive, rather than proactive, response behaviours and distinguished these behaviours from the projected needs for proactive, assertive, entrepreneurial behaviours that would gain them a meaningful place in distance education. Interviewees also had the sense that the educators were managing a period of very rapid expansion, in part fuelled by the Contact North/Contact Nord network, and in part by the new programme development funded by the Northern Distance Education Fund, and that they were not included in that expansion: "Libraries have been left behind",... "Distance Education will grow, and I hope they will let us grow along with it."

Regarding their relationships with students, interviewees were asked what they considered to be the major difficulties in getting distance education students to use library services. To no great surprise, the responses focussed on seven factors: i) the exclusion process - libraries have been built out of courses because of pre-packaging of selected information, or ii) because the course designers see no need to encourage students to use information gathering skills; the lack of knowledge about library services; iii) the difficulty of identifying distance education students; iv) the length of time required for library-requested material to reach the student; v) the short length of many courses; vi) the "last minute" nature of some of the course planning that renders adequate resource provision impossible; and vii) the lack of knowledge among library staff about the course requirements, resource demands and enroled students. Additional factors mentioned less frequently were: the institutional anonymity of some course tutors (i.e., the part-timers and extra-murals) who may not get an adequate chance to get to know their home institutional services well enough to suggest to students ways to use those services effectively; the lack of planned follow-up to the very few on-site field visits made by library staff to orient students to services; and the difficulty for library staff or conducting reference interviews without the usual non-verbal cues found in face-to-face contexts (Burge, Snow & Howard 1988a:11,12,13).

Other highlights come from questionnaire data received from the seventeen responding academic library staff.

> Fourteen of the seventeen respondents provide services to distance education students and two more expect to do so. These services most frequently involved arranging interlibrary loans, selecting appropriate materials, conducting computerized literature searches and referring students to deposit collections. Communication technologies available to assist in service provision include Fax, computer conferencing, and telephone (five with a toll-free line and two with a 24-hour answering service).
>
> Although respondents reported that students are informed about library services through brochures (8 responses) and information placed in course manuals (7 responses), almost all agree that students don't use library services regularly, for a variety of reasons: "students aren't aware of services offered" (14 respondents); "students think they can get by in their courses without library help" (13 respondents); and, in fact, "students actually can get by without library help" (7 respondents).
>
> Very little involvement in course design an d development procedures was reported. Library staff most frequently checked holdings of materials, but rarely discussed library services with the course instructor. Respondents also reported that the library usually has to search out information on registration, with little data coming automatically from the Registrar's office or the Distance Education Coordinator. Although the majority of respondents chose not to identify either the best features of their services to distance education students or the problems involved, four major suggestions were made regarding improvement of service: upgraded telecommunication facilities (11 respondents), increased learning resources (10 respondents), additional physical space (7 respondents), and increased involvement in course design (7 respondents). Interest was also shown in participation in professional development activities on adult learning (Burge, Snow & Howard 1988a:16,17).

The student responses numbered 517 returns, and here some interesting results were obtained.

> A large number of students (67%) report they received all materials required for their course either within the course manual or in a separate package. Another 30.5% report they receive a partial set of resources. Such a high level of materials provided may mean that they need search no further than the course package for resource needs. In fact, when questioned on library use (relating to use of reference collection, borrowing an item, requesting an interlibrary loan) a significant number of respondents indicated "not at all".

> Respondents who did request material report they usually request two or three items at one time from the public library (23%) and from the university library (17.6%). Material is received within twenty-four hours from the public library, and within three days to two weeks from the university library.
>
> When asked for suggestions for improving library services, some respondents provided a number of suggestions, while many offered no suggestions at all. Suggestions were grouped as follows: more information regarding available services, more resources, faster delivery of materials, changes in library policy (longer loan periods, etc.) and more welcoming staff (Burge, Snow & Howard 1988a:19,20).

In drawing out conclusions and recommendations from the study, we felt it necessary to provide a conceptual framework for building relationships and delineating responsibilities. While we recognized that the librarians were always busy and committed, we did wonder sometimes if they were not being successful in leaving their own territories and connecting with their colleagues and students. What concerned us most of all was the process of exclusion. It operated in one or more of the following conditions:

- inadequate or no intra-institutional communication between library and distance education staff;
- "one-shot" orientation-to-library approaches to students;
- course designers who build library-based services out of courses;
- library staff who lack the knowledge of basic educational theory that would have otherwise allowed them to build partnerships with course designers and tutors, based on the use of some common language about how adults learn;
- students who are totally invisible or anonymous to library staff -- not seen, not talked with, not written to;
- library staff who lack incentives and rewards to push themselves and their services beyond the familiarity and comfort of traditional routines;
- educators who adopt the transmission model of teaching ("give 'em fish") and who do not expect students to develop their own 'fishing rods' (Burge. Snow & Howard 1988a:22,23).

Our conceptual framework held components linked by seven mechanisms: programme and course planning, services marketing, resource development, data access, technical communications, services and materials delivery, and professional development.

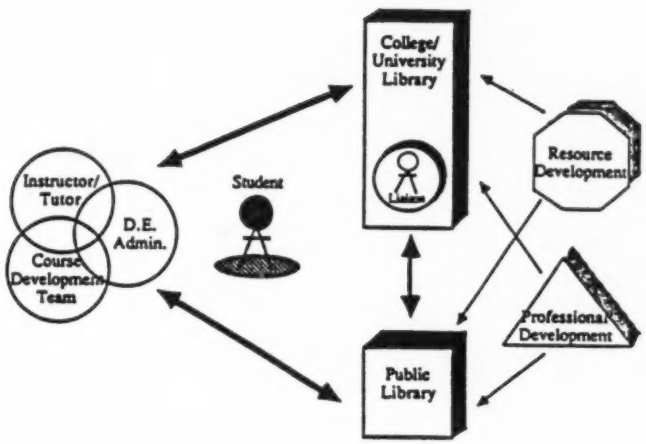

Figure 1 : Developing Partnerships Model

Here is not the place to list all those recommendations - they can be found in the actual report (which includes all the questionnaires and is still available). It is enough to say that we found relationships between the educators and the librarians to be somewhat tenuous, and divisions of responsibility to be unclear and fragmented, with consequent frustrations for library staff. Naturally, they carried some negative feelings about their actual and potential roles.

The second example of research experience with relationship building and responsibility sharing did not involve librarians directly but the outcomes of our study may not augur well for them.

The study focussed on whatever interactions occurred between a learner and an institutional staff member designated to help that learner through a course, eg., a graduate student or a faculty member or a part-time tutor (Burge, Howard & Ironside 1991).
The study was directed by six questions:

- who are the tutors (instructors, markers, and other mediators) and the distance learners in terms of their age, sex, education, geographic location?
- how do the tutors and learners describe the roles and responsibilities of the tutor function?
- how are the learners experiencing the impact of tutoring activities?
- what are the tutors actually doing?
- are new communications technologies being used for interaction between learners and tutors?
- how would tutors and students like to see the tutoring or mediation function develop in the future? (Burge, Howard & Ironside 1991:9)

You can read the full results in the study, but let me give you key non-statistical findings for they have shocked some distance educators. Our findings were based on data from 84 (out of 205) tutor questionnaires and 447 (out of 1040) student questionnaires.

Relationship between students and tutors are not extensive.

> One of the most striking findings of the study was the very low level of student-initiated contact with tutors. This lack of contact was evident in each of the three major areas in which contact might be expected to take place, that is, to ask general questions about regulations and requirements, to ask for help and/or changes specifically related to the course, and to discuss personal problems or learning difficulties that were affecting the student's progress. Only four reasons for contact out of the sixteen listed in question 13 were reported at the "sometimes" or "rarely" levels by thirty percent or more of the respondents: (1) to ask questions about general administrative issues (37.1%), (2) about course requirements (33.7%), (3) about the course content (31.9%), and (4) to request an extension of time on assignment deadlines (30.1%). A small percentage of students had contacted their tutor to ask for clarification of the tutor's comments on their assignments (22.3%), to ask for help in preparing an assignment (20.7%) or to question an assigned grade (19.5%). However, generally, the respondents appeared to be either fairly self reliant or determined not to contact their tutor for anything other than grade - related issues (Burge, Howard & Ironside 1991:22).

It appears that relationships may or may not emerge from the major responsibilities carried out by tutors - grading and marking assignments. Students' attitudes and behaviour appear to operate such that tutors are useful for their content knowledge and ability to communicate.

> What does the learner consider to be the most important skills for a tutor? Two tutor skill areas were considered most important by 89% of respondents (see Table 5, p. 58); having adequate subject knowledge, and being able to communicate that knowledge clearly. Then a significant drop in expectation - 54% wanted the tutor to have practical experience related to course content and 51% wanted the tutor to be available for advice and help. Most students did not expect their tutor to show understanding about problems that might affect their learning (83%), or about administrative procedures (80%). And most did not expect their tutor to be expert in the use of communications technology (92%). While most of the students wanted to see their tutors knowledgeable about course content, however, almost half (48.4%) of respondents to a later opinion question agreed or strongly agreed that "with a good course manual, I don't need the help of a tutor (Burge, Howard & Ironside 1991:27).

In summary, the distance tutoring environment that we discovered has five general conditions:

i) It is a silent world, generally - almost three quarters of tutors make contact with their learners only via written comments and grades on assignments and thus they remain faceless and voiceless to the learner. Tutors are not using interactive technologies of any kind to stay in touch.

ii) It is a cognitive world, generally - contact that does occur involves course content questions mainly. Although three quarters of the learner respondents want overt encouragement with their assignment feedback, only one third receive such affective support.

iii) It is a receptive and reactive world, generally - students are cast in a receptive role: they seldom contact their tutors (partly because they find that tutors are not readily available beyond normal office hours); they focus instead on studying course materials provided and completing assignments independently. Tutors are cast in a reactive role: they wait for assignments to arrive in order to grade and comment on work completed.

iv) It is a cool interpersonal world, generally - the students give at best neutral assessments of the general quality of contact with their tutors and consider that tutors have only marginal impact on their studies. Only half the tutors considered that being available for help and encouragement for students beyond the limits of clarifying course-related material was of high importance.

v) It is a warmer, more satisfactory intrapersonal world, generally - most students experience no serious difficulty in using course materials, in fact many experience a strong sense of achievement and a great majority enjoy the flexible, efficient use of time. For the most part, learners do not feel disadvantaged because they are taking courses via distance mode, rather they feel privileged to have the opportunity and they request expanded programs.

(Burge, Howard & Ironside 1991:33/35)

You'll note, as we did, the presence of affective or feeling dimensions in these conditions; these relate to the motivating drive of affiliation mentioned earlier.

When asked to assess the perceived level of tutor impact and quality of contacts, students and tutors gave different opinions.

> ...out of seven areas of potential tutor activity [helping learners to acquire study skills, understand course content, apply new knowledge, develop and sustain self confidence and morale, prepare for exams, and develop critical thinking skills, and solving administrative problems] only one area - understanding course content - received similar ratings from tutors and students, and then, the perceptions matched only at the "moderate" level of impact (Table 6, p. 59). In the other areas of impact - developing learning skills, applying new knowledge, sustaining self-confidence and morale, preparing for examinations, solving administrative problems and developing critical thinking skills - major differences were apparent, in some cases with a variance of 30 to 40 percent... tutors think they are having a wider general impact at nearly all levels than their students think they are having. The student perceptions are especially noteworthy for the high levels of response at the "none" level across all activity areas (Burge, Howard & Ironside 1991:39).

Almost half (47.2%) of students wanted contact with their tutor to be more frequent, with the best forms of that contact being comments in the feedback on written assignments being available during specific hours. The students' wishes for the type for comment they most need are a reminder to all of us that the affective, feeling elements in learning are crucial, but often neglected. The following table shows the type of feedback wanted and received.

Table 16: Type of Feedback Wanted and Feedback Received

		What Students Want	What Students Get
a.	A grade only	2.0	12.1
b.	A grade + grammar comment	1.8	6.0
c.	A grade + grammar + content comment	20.8	47.3
d.	A grade + grammar + content + encouragement	74.8	31.3

If you substitute the words "information delivery" for "a grade and grammar", could you ask your students how much affective support they get from library staff, and not just content support? In fact, can you make other connections between your work and that of the tutors? Do any of our research findings have transferable meaning for you?

Assessments of the quality of contact were, overall, lukewarm: 35.9% of student respondents rated highly their contact with their tutor, 38.2% gave ratings at the midway point of the 5 point scale, i.e., neither satisfied or unsatisfied, and 25.2% indicated dissatisfaction.

This study reinforced for me several key things about distance learning. First, many adults have to take a "pragmatic excellence" orientation to their studies. They want to be successful, indeed many place unrealistically high demands on themselves; but they face relentless demands on their energy, time, and psychic resources. They want, therefore, efficient accessibility to tutors and fast and freqent feedback on their work. Need for achievement is conditioned by the need for affiliation, which serves emotional and cognitive needs. Affiliation means being connected literally and metaphorically with helping people and the course content. Second, time and productivity management become crucial for both success and the reduction of stress. Students do not want to keep telephoning, or not have a Fax or email message left unanswered within 24 hours. Tutors and other helpers will be contacted only as they are perceived to be useful. Recall Faith Popcorn's "99 Lives" and the needs for streamlining? The question for us therefore is the extent to which we help and hinder that management: how nurturing are we? how efficient are we? how communicative are we? how flexible and pragmatic are we? Third, learners need flexibility and understanding from educators but they may not expect to get those qualities.

Since librarianship is dominated by women, here is a gender-relevant result that may interest you. I leave you to draw your own conclusions.

> No major differences emerged in the evaluation by men and women of the importance of various tutor skill areas. Only in response to questions that related to the expanded, non-academic context of daily life activities did modest variance occur. For example, slightly more men than women reported that home, family and work responsibilities had an adverse effect on their distance studies (73.2% - men and 66.1% - women). Is it possible that women are better able to incorporate studying into their weekly schedule because they are already managing complex home and work schedules? Our female respondents certainly recognized that there was an impact, but they did not all qualify this as an adverse effect. They did, however, comment often on the need for understanding of their complex situations: "I find most tutors (markers) are not very tuned in or sympathetic with today's woman trying to raise a family, study and work outside the home...Women missed the peer contacts of the classroom somewhat more than the men; while 30.6% of women cited lack of peer contact as the aspect of distance learning they least enjoyed, only 22.5% of men gave the same response. Men, on the other hand, were more concerned about assessment generally than were women; while 10.6% of male respondents gave concerns about marks and assessment as the aspect they least enjoyed, fewer women (3.0%) reported the same concern (Burge, Howard, & Ironside 1991:31).

With these research results, and our joint reflections about our contributions to practice, it is time to turn to some issues so that we may begin some dialogue of our own. I want to contribute four issues: professional identity, elegance of practice, inclusion,and expectations.

Professional identity is shaped in part by the language of a profession. The maturity of a profession can be assessed (in part) in the same way as human maturation may be assessed, ie, in the extent to which people are willing to question what they have taken for granted, escape from the false protection of defense mechanisms, think in complex terms, tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty, and live in interdependent and empathetic modes with others. Language therefore can be questioned to assess the values, ideals and baggage that both promote and hinder the profession it represents. Is it time therefore for some conceptual dry cleaning of some of your language, as it is time for distance educators? Are you educators or are you librarians? Are dedication and commitment outmoded ideals in these days of hard-nosed political battles for resources? Is the term patron just a little precious? Is the term off-campus too limiting and building-centric, given the reach of the new technologies? It certainly is centripetal in connotation. How do you see yourselves; are you into information management or people management?: one approach has to take priority. Remember that the railroads got into trouble because they thought they were into railroads, when in fact they were into transportation. How much of your professional language and identity is based on images in rear view mirrors, and how much through the windshield? (We all have this problem). If you were to draw an image

or metaphorical representation of yourself at work, what image comes to mind? As I speak, could you draw something? If so, does it show congruence with what values you espouse?

Concerning **elegance**, I mean doing what is appropriate and parsimonious with some style. There are two sub issues here. The "just-in-time" delivery goal is now more relevant than the "just-in-case" acquisition goal, but there is a quantity issue for the delivery: how much is enough? I suspect that many readers now prefer the briefcase amount to the suitcase. Computer conference students often feel great pressure over the information load created by asynchronous messaging. I suspect that as portable, powerful voice and text computers become ubiquitous, and access to global data bases gets easier, our learners and tutors may feel overload. So how do you ensure that parsimony beats profusion; that while nothing is superfluous, everything is relevant, and that effort is not misdirected? The second sub-issue for elegance is transparency. We appreciate and need to be in situations where we get the most return for the least effort. Complicated software or fashionable technologies that demand much attention and distract us from substantive productiveness will not last. Weiser sums up well this quality of transparency:

> "The most profound technologies are those that disappear. They weave themselves into the fabric of everyday life until they are indistinguable from it" (Weiser 1991:94).

The issue of **inclusion** relates to professional identity. I use it here to refer to people connections. To what extent are you built into, not out of, course design, information delivery, and course evaluation? How often do you interact with learners during the course? You are relatively neutral territory for learners who are caught in a power differential with their teacher or tutor and there is scope for you to use that special status to support learners affectively as well as cognitively and logistically (Burge & Snow 1990). Inclusion or exclusion also can operate in all types of relationships - librarian and course developers, librarians and learners, librarians and tutors, librarians and administrators, librarians and technologists. But like democracy, inclusion will not be given to us - we have to seize it by being proactive, knowledgeable and anticipatory. Here are two examples: a librarian contributing skilfully to the development of course evaluation questionnaires, instead of passively accepting everything the distance educator may remember to build in; librarians communicating directly with learners and not waiting for permission from the educators. Are library schools and the workplace promoting a skilful entrepreneurial style that will promote pro-active and anticipatory behaviour? Any librarian in my experience who has shown those qualities and helped me to control my own information workload has achieved instant sainthood.

People connections are also partly a function of one's actual location in the work place. Two sub-issues about the workplace are relevant here. The traditional presence of a library in an institution seems to have been maintained by centripetal forces - everyone had to come into the library. Now however the forces appear to be more centrifugal because you have created marvellous information networks and access that don't demand that we learners physically travel into the library. Instead we can travel around, ie, browse in a huge data world from our office, plane, home, train or wherever. Can librarians also go centrifugal, ie, take their terminals and CD-ROM's and people skills into the educator's workplaces? Then the presence of the library

(always crucial for political reasons) is centred more in people and less in buildings. The second sub-issue is that the workplace may be both virtual and actual; virtual because of the on-line access, searching and group dialogue through conferencing. If your institution is involved in virtual classrooms, i.e., CC, your inclusion could be strengthened by your running a Library conference branch in the course so that you have one way of maintaining a presence. It has been proven that people who may be shy or cautious in face-to-face settings will be less concerned in CC with social posturing and be more communicative and open (Sproull & Kiesler 1991). Will computer and audio conferencing therefore help learners overcome anxieties about talking with librarians if they are all in the same democratic conference environment? The latticed, not hierarchical, people connections that are possible in CC should promote dialogue, build relationships, and help even mature library users beat any lingering fears about talking with librarians (MacKeracher 1983).

With the issue of **expectations** we all face some complex problems. The first problem relates to responsibility. As a learning designer and tutor in distance education, and as a facilitator in visual classrooms, I am always confronted with the problem of how to move learners sensitively and consistently out of their "teach me" passive, receptive attitudes, and develop the skills and desire to take responsibility for their learning - in the way that they have to take responsibility in other adult societal roles. It is a tricky problem to solve and often requires rapid judgements around feasibility and timing of interventions designed to prompt and support learners. Do you face this problem? How willing are your learners to spend the time needed to learn the skills for independent navigation around the data networks? Do you have the staff resources to take care of this problem?

A second problem relates to my energy level as an educator. There is a real limit to the energy and time I am prepared to spend on checking out how responsive and connected the library staff want to be. If my initial expectations of them are low, then I have to decide how I will deal with that result; some days I am even too weary to think about the problem, so, as Popcorn and others predict, I take the path of easiest action and don't call the librarian. That action ultimately helps no one.

A third problem relates to finding and getting information - not only "just-in-time" but preferably by yesterday, right on target, and with some serendipity thrown in as a value added bonus. When I call up our library as a learner, I invariably need the full text, and fast. It's not that I'm disorganized; rather, as I develop a train of thought or follow my style of being divergent before convergent, I want to explore ideas - but I often have a deadline as the extra stressor in the process of being creative. If I find out, for example, that the inter-library loan person will get around to my request "next week" because of her/his existing workload, my anxiety level may rise. Fax machines have enabled me to get other information very fast, so why cannot the librarians deliver for me? Our learners have the same delivery problem, but they also are coping with the power differential between learner and tutor and their own desire to get a high grade. What they need is not an impressive range of references jumping off a page or a computer screen, for that supply brings only temporary relief; they need a relevant collection of full texts. How capable are your technologies and staff resources for providing that collection?

Can you help a learner collect an "electronic bookcase," or make available all the course readings on a CD-ROM? If you can, you will enhance your status and the quality of distance learning immeasurably - not only in efficiency and effectiveness, but also in political terms. You will also deny those conservative face-to-face classroom academics their denigration of distance education when they allege that distance learners and tutors cannot get adequate library services.

Another problem with expectations relates to relationships between you and distance educators. Right now no one expects you to have an M. Ed. (Adult Education) degree as well as your M.L.S. degree. You've had to learn a lot of conceptual, technical, philosophical and procedural matters concerned with the acquisition, storage and retrieval of information and its receipt by users. I ask you to consider future education and training for yourselves in adult education if you want to be able to select the most appropriate models of teaching (given the characteristics of adult learners), talk the right language with educators, cater for the style differences in cognition and learning and respond empathetically to learners' affective and cognitive problems without feeling that you are out of your depth. When librarians can use educational language, they stand a greater chance of being heard by course designers and tutors as credible partners. They even may be helping to improve the quality of visual classroom teaching in universities. When a faculty member suggests that he/she can "do without the library," you could offer some ideas that are not only sound teaching practice, but would also relieve pressure on that professor. Here we are back to the anticipatory style I keep hoping that librarians will show. If librarians get excluded because they are perceived by teachers and course designers to be somewhat distant, or that they cannot maintain fast retrieval and delivery, then the librarians have to think about how they can earn inclusion.

To end my part of this session, let me summarize briefly by suggesting that the four issues of identity, elegance, inclusion and expectations are ultimately about personal agency - what it takes to operate in changing and often conflictual environments in order to meet one's own goals, and to be seen by others to be successful users of our own power. I'm sure this conference will show many examples of personal agency in professional settings but I ask that we think about how our images of personal agency may mature and change to meet the new demands of the future. Let me reiterate my belief that in terms of those societal trends affecting the learning and lifestyle preferences of adults, you have an unprecedented opportunity for significant innovative practice.

I have talked enough about my concerns and values. It is time now to acknowledge your experience, skills, and concerns in a joint dialogue.

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